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STUDY OF 3-ETHYL-5-AMINO-2-NITROBENZENE

ТОРСЕНОВА Л. М. У

L O D / O I

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation

DRAMATIC CHARACTER
E S S A Y
O N
SHAKESPEARE'S

DRAMATIC CHARACTER

O F

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

MY intention in the following discourse, is to explain and account for the pleasure we receive from the representation of Shakespeare's dramatic character of Sir John Falstaff. In treating this subject, I shall with as much brevity as possible mention the cause on which our pleasure depends; and then by a particular analysis of the character endeavour to establish my theory.

PART I.

No external object affects us in a more disagreeable manner, than the view of suffer-

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ing occasioned by cruelty ; our uneasiness arises not only from the display of calamity, but from the display of an inhuman mind. For how much soever human nature may exhibit interesting appearances, there are dispositions in mankind, which cannot otherwise be regarded than with abhorrence. Of this sort are cruelty, malice, and revenge. They affect us in the representation in the same manner as in real life. Neither the poet nor historian, if they represent them unmixed and unconnected with other ingredients, can ever render them agreeable. Who can without pain peruse the tragedy of Titus Andronicus, or the account given by Suetonius of the butcheries and enormities perpetrated by some of the Cæsars?

Yet with cruelty, malice, and revenge, many useful and even excellent qualities may be blended ; of this kind are courage, independence of spirit, discernment of character, sagacity in the contrivance, and dexterity

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 3

terity in the execution, of arduous enterprises. These, considered apart, and unconnected with moral or immoral affections, are viewed with considerable pleasure, and regarded with some respect. United with good dispositions, they produce the highest merit, and form the most exalted character. United with evil affections, though they do not lessen, yet perhaps they counteract; at least they alter the nature and tendency of our abhorrence. We do not indeed, on their account, regard the inhuman character with less disapprobation; on the contrary, our disapprobation is, if possible, more determined. Yet, by the mixture of different ingredients, our sensations are changed; they are not very painful; nay, if the proportion of respectable qualities be considerable, they become agreeable. The character, though highly blameable, attracts our notice, excites curiosity, and yields delight. The character of Satan in Paradise Lost, one of the most finished in the whole range

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of epic poetry, fully illustrates our observation: it displays, inhumanity, malice, and revenge, united with sagacity, intrepidity, dexterity, and perseverance. Of a similar kind, though with some different lineaments, is Shakespeare's King Richard the Third; it excites indignation: indignation, however, is not a painful, but rather an agreeable feeling; a feeling too, which, if duly governed, we do not blame ourselves for indulging.

We are led imperceptibly, almost by every, and even by opposite bonds of association, by those of contrast and resemblance, to extend these remarks. There are qualities in human nature that excite abhorrence; and qualities also that excite disgust. We see some dispositions that are enormously, and some that are meanly, shocking. Some give us pain by their atrocity, and some by their baseness. As virtuous actions may be divided into those that are respectable, and those that are amiable; so of vicious actions, some

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 5

some are hateful, and affect us with horror ; others are vile, and produce averſion. By one claſs, we have an imaginary, ſympathetic, and tranſient apprehenſion of being hurt ; by the other, we have a ſimilar apprehenſion of being polluted. We would chaſtiſe the one with painful, and the other with ſhameful puniſhment. Of the latter fort are the groſs exceſſes and perverſion of inferior appetites. They hardly bear to be named ; and ſcarcely, by any representation, without judicious circumlocution, and happy adjuncts, can be rendered agreeable. Who can mention, without reluctance, the mere glutton, the mere epicure, and the ſot ? And to theſe may be added the coward, the liar, the ſelfiſh and aſſenting paraſite.

Yet the conſtituent parts of ſuch characters may be ſo blended with other qualities of an agreeable, but neutral kind, as not only to loſe their diſguſtful, but to gain an engaging aſpect. They may be united

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with a complaisance that has no asperity but that falls in readily, or without apparent constraint, with every opinion or inclination. They may be united with good-humour, as opposed to moroseness, and harshness of opposition: with ingenuity and versatility, in the arts of deceit: and with faculties for genuine or even spurious wit; for the spurious requires some ability, and may, to some minds, afford amusement. Add to this, that in fully explaining the appearance, in explaining how the mixture of different mental qualities, in the same character, affords delight; we must recollect, as on similar occasions, that when different and even opposite feelings encounter one another, and affect us at the same time; those that prevail, under the guidance of some vigorous passion, carry the rest along with them; direct them so as to receive the same tendency with themselves, and impelling the mind in the same manner, receive from their coincidence additional

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 37

tional power *. They resemble the swell and progress of a Tartar army. One horde meets with another; they fight; the vanquished unite with the victors: incorporated with them, under the direction of a Timour or a Zingis, they augment their force, and enable them to conquer others.

Characters of the kind above-mentioned, consisting of mean and at the same time of agreeable qualities, regarded with disapprobation, are yet regarded with some attention: they procure to themselves some attachment; they excite neither fear, envy, nor suspicion: as they are not reckoned noxious, the disapprobation they produce is slight; and they yield or promote amusement. What else are the race of parasites both of ancient and modern times?—the *gnathonici* † of different sorts, the direct and indirect, the smooth and the blunt?—those who by assentation, buffoonery, and even

* Hume's Essay on Tragedy.

† Terence.

agreeably to the inviting manners of mankind, relieve the fatigue of sloth ; fill up the vacuity of minds that must, but cannot think ; and are a suitable substitute, when the gorged appetite loathes the banquet, and the downy couch can allure no slumbers ?

As persons who display cruel dispositions, united with force of mind and superior intellectual abilities, are regarded with indignation ; so those whose ruling desires aim at the gratification of gross appetite, united with good-humour, and such intellectual endowments as may be fitted to gain favor, are regarded with scorn. “ Scorn, * like
“ indignation, seems to arise from a comparative view of two objects, the one
“ worthy, and the other unworthy, which
“ are nevertheless united ; but which, on
“ account of the wrong or impropriety oc-

* Essay on Richard the Third.

“ caſioned

“conceive should be disunited and unconnected.” The difference between them seems to be, that the objects of indignation are great and important, those of scorn little and unimportant. Indignation, of consequence, leads us to expressions of anger; but scorn, as it denotes the feeling or discernment of inferiority, with such mixture of pretensions as to produce contrast and incongruity, is often expressed by laughter; and is, in a serious mood, connected with pity. Disdain is a-kin to indignation, and implies consciousness of inherent worth. You disdain to act an unworthy part:

Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd
The cheeks of Dithyrambus.— GLOVER.

Contempt does not so much arise from such consciousness, as from the perception of baseness in the object. To despise, denotes a sentiment between disdain and contempt, which implies some opinion of our

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own superiority, and some opinion of inferiority in the object; but neither in their extremes *. Disdain, like indignation, is allied to anger; contempt, like scorn, or more so, is connected with pity; but we often despise, without either pitying or being angry. When the meanness, which is the object of contempt, aspires by pretensions to a connection with merit, and the design appearing productive of no great harm, we are inclined to laugh: we are moved with scorn.

But in what manner so ever we understand the terms, for they are often confounded, and may not perhaps, in their usual acceptation, be thought to convey the complete meaning here annexed to them; the distinctions themselves have a real foundation: and that which we have chiefly in view at present, is fully il-

* Perhaps it denotes a kind of which disdain and contempt are species: we condemn a threat, we disdain an offer; we despise them both.

illustrated

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 11

illustrated in the character of Sir John Falstaff. In him the effects arising from the "mixture of mean, grovelling, and base dispositions with those qualities and dispositions of a neutral kind, which afford pleasure; and though not in themselves objects of approbation, yet lead to attachment, are distinctly felt and perceived." In what follows of this discourse, therefore, I shall first exemplify some of the baser, and then some of those agreeable parts of the character that reconcile our feelings, but not our reason, to its deformity.

P A R T II.

1. "The desire of gratifying the grosser and lower appetites, is the ruling and strongest principle in the mind of Falstaff." Such indulgence is the aim of his projects: upon this his conduct very uniformly hinges: and to this his other passions are not only subordinate, but subservient.

His

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His gluttony and love of dainty fare are admirably delineated in many passages ; but with peculiar felicity in the following ; where the poet displaying Falstaff's sensuality, in a method that is humorous and indirect ; and placing him in a ludicrous situation, reconciles us by his exquisite pleasantry to a mean object.

“ *Poins.* Falstaff ! — fast asleep behind
 “ the arras : and snorting like a horse.
 “ — *P. H.* Hark, how hard he fetches
 “ breath ! Search his pockets. What
 “ hast thou found ? — *Poins.* Nothing
 “ but papers, my Lord. — *P. H.* Let's
 “ see what they be. Read them. —
 “ *Poins.* Item, a capon, 2s. 2d. Item,
 “ Sauce, 4d. Item, Sack, two gallons,
 “ 5s. 8d. Item, Anchovies and sack after
 “ supper, 2s. 6d. Item. Bread, a half-
 “ penny. — *P. H.* O monstrous ! but
 “ one halfpenny worth of bread to this in-
 “ tolerable deal of sack !” — Who but
 Shakespeare could have made a tavern-bill
 the

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 13

the subject of so much mirth; and so happily instrumental in the display of character?

The sensuality of the character is also held forth in the humorous and ludicrous views that are given of his person.

"*Falstaff*. The rascal hath removed my horse, and tied him, I know not where. " If I travel but four feet by the square " further a-foot, I shall break my wind. " Eight yards of uneven ground, is three-score and ten miles a-foot with me: and " the stony-hearted villains know it well " enough. — *P. H.* Peace, ye fat-guts! " lie down, lay thine ear close to the " ground, and list if thou canst hear the " tread of travellers. — *Falstaff*. Have " you any levers to lift me up again, being " down? S'blood, I'll not bear mine own " flesh so far a-foot again for all the coin in " thy father's exchequer."

2. Pursuing no other object than the gratification of bodily pleasure, it is not wonderful

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wonderful that in situations of danger, the care of the body should be his chief concern. He avoids situations of danger: he does not wish to be valiant; and without struggle or reluctance, adheres to his resolution. Thus his cowardice seems to be the result of deliberation, rather than the effect of constitution *: and is a determined purpose of not exposing to injury or destruction that corporeal structure, foul and unwieldy tho' it be, on which his supreme enjoyment so completely depends. His well known soliloquy on honor displays a mind, that having neither enthusiasm for fame, nor sense of reputation, is influenced in the hour of danger, by no principle but the fear of bodily pain: and if man were a mere sentient and mortal animal, governed by no higher principle than sensual appetite, we might accede to his reasoning.—“Can honour set a leg?” “No: or an arm? No: or take away

* Essay on Shakespeare's Falstaff.

“the

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 15

"the grief of a wound? No: honour hath
"no skill in surgery then? No."—Thus
while the speaker, in expressing his real
sentiments, affects a playful manner, he af-
fords a curious example of self-imposition,
of an attempt to disguise conscious demerit,
and escape from conscious disapproba-
tion.

13. As persons whose strongest principle
is the love of fame, are nevertheless moved
by inferior appetites, and seek occasionally
their gratification; so the sensualist, con-
structed originally like the rest of mankind,
may be sometimes moved by the desire of
praise or distinction. Or, connecting this
desire, and the circumstances we have to
mention, more intimately with the ruling
power, we may suppose that he finds the
good-will, and consequently the good opi-
nion, of his associates, requisite or favorable
to his enjoyments, and may wish therefore
to gain their regard. The distinction, how-
ever, or esteem, to which he aspires, is not

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for the reality, but the appearance, of merit : about the reality, provided he appear meritorious, he is quite unconcerned.

4. Now this disposition leads to presumption, to boastful affectation and vain-glory.—Falstaff is boastful and vain-glorious. He wishes, on many occasions, and manifestly for selfish purposes, to be reckoned a person of consummate and undaunted courage. He speaks of cowardice with contempt, and affects the firmness of conscious valour : “ A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too, marry “ and amen.” He would also pass for a man whose assistance is of consequence, or whose favor deserves to be courted ; and in both these attempts he is sometimes, though not always, successful. His hostess and Shallow may be imposed upon ; but he is better known to Prince Henry.—Consistently with, or in consequence of this vain-glorious disposition, whenever he finds himself respected, and that he is reckoned a person

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 17

a person of some importance, he affects pride, becomes insolent, arrogant, and overbearing. It is in this manner he treats his hostess, Bardolph, and other inferior associates. "*P. H.* They take it already upon "their salvation, that though I be but "Prince of Wales, yet I am king of court; and tell me flatly, I am no proud "Jack, like Falstaff."

5. Falstaff is also deceitful: for the connection between vain-glorious affectation, and unembarrassed, unreluctant deceit, is natural and intimate. He is deceitful in every form of falsehood. He is a flatterer: he is even hypocritical; and tells the chief justice that he has "lost his voice singing anthems."

6. Shakespeare intending to display the magic of his skill by rendering a mean character highly interesting, has added to it as many bad qualities as, consistently with one another and with his main design, can be united in one assemblage. He accord-

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ingly

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ingly represents him, not only as a voluptuary, cowardly, vain-glorious, with all the arrogance connected with vain-glory, and deceitful in every shape of deceit; but injurious, incapable of gratitude or of friendship, and vindictive. The chief object of his life being the indulgence of low appetite, he has no regard for right or wrong; and in order to compass his unworthy designs, he practises fraud and injustice. His attachments are mercenary: he speaks disrespectfully of Prince Henry, to whose friendship he is indebted; and values his friendship for convenience rather than from regard. He is also vindictive: but as he expresses his revengeful intention, without any opportunity of displaying it in action, his resentment becomes ridiculous. His menace against the chief Justice, though illiberal and malicious, is not regarded with indignation. One mode of his vengeance is to defame those that offend him by unwarrantable publications. "He will print them," says Page, speaking about

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about some of his ill-intentioned letters,
“for he cares not what he puts into the
“press.”

From the foregoing enumeration, it appears abundantly manifest, that our poet intended to represent Falstaff as very mean and worthless ; but, agreeably to an ingenious and peculiar method of unfolding the real character, and which he practises on some other occasions when he would obviate misapprehension, he embraces a good opportunity of making one of the most discerning personages connected with him, give the real delineation. Prince Henry has all along a clear and decided view of Falstaff; and in the admirable scene where the King is personated as reproving his son, he thus describes him : “Thou art violently carried away from grace : there is
“a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an
“old fat man : a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that
“trunk of humours, &c. that stuff’d cloak-

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“bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox
 “with the pudding in his belly, that reve-
 “rend vice, that grey iniquity, that vanity
 “in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste
 “fack and drink it? Wherein neat and
 “cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it?
 “Wherein cunning but in craft? Wherein
 “crafty but in villany? Wherein villanous,
 “but in all things? Wherein worthy, but
 “in nothing?”—We have here the real
 moral character; we have an enumeration
 of disgustful and base qualities, with-
 out a single circumstance to palliate or re-
 lieve. The speaker enlarges on his *sensu-
 ality* as the leading feature in the charac-
 ter, and the principle on which every thing
 else in his enumeration depends. How then
 comes Falstaff to be a favorite? a favorite
 with Prince Henry? and a favorite on the
 English stage? For he not only makes us
 laugh, but, it must be acknowledged, is re-
 garded with some affection. The answer
 to these enquiries leads us to our last and
 chief

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 21

chief division: it leads to illustrate the associated and blended qualities which not only reconcile us to the representation, but by their mixture give us singular pleasure.

P A R T III.

Those qualities in the character of Sir John Falstaff which may be accounted estimable are of two different kinds, the social and intellectual.

I. His social qualities are joviality and good-humour. These dispositions though they are generally agreeable, and may in one sense of the word be termed moral, as influencing the manners and deportment of mankind, are not on all occasions, as we shall see exemplified in the present instance, to be accounted virtuous. They may be agreeable without being objects of approbation. Persons who have never given much exercise to their minds, whose powers of intellect and imagination languish

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through in exertion, can seldom have much enjoyment in being alone. He who cannot think, must fly from himself; and, without having much regard for others, will seek relief in society. But as the bulk of mankind are not very inquisitive about the motives or causes of those actions that do not interest them very much, they are pleased with such appearances of a relish for social intercourse; they are prepossessed in favor of those who court their fellowship, or who in their company discover cheerfulness and complacency.

Falstaff's love of society needs no illustration; and that it is unconnected with friendship or affection is no less apparent. Yet the quality renders him acceptable.— It receives great additional recommendation from his good-humour. As, amongst those whom he wishes to please, he is not sullen nor reserved, neither is he morose, nor apt to contradict or be offended. Persons of active minds are most liable to such excesses.

Whether

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Whether they engage in the pursuits of fame, fortune, or even of amusement, they form schemes, indulge expectation, are disquieted with solicitude, elated with joy, or vexed with disappointment. The activity of their spirits exposes them to more occasions of discomposure; and their sensibility, natural or acquired, renders them more susceptible of impressions than other men. Hence, without careful discipline or steady resolution, they are apt to become uncomplying, violent, or impetuous. But the mere voluptuary is exposed to no such perversion. He who never engages in serious argument, who maintains no opinion, who contrives no intricate or extensive projects, who is connected with no party, or concerned in no speculation, who has no interest in any thing or any person beyond the gratification of mere appetite, has no object to contend for, nothing that can make him so eager, so tenacious, so obstinate, or unyielding as persons of a different character.

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In such men, so slight a desire as that of being acceptable to some particular persons will, in their company, counterbalance every tendency to fretfulness, insolence, or ill-humour. Such seems to be the good-humour of Falstaff; for our poet discriminates with exquisite judgment, and delineates his conception with power. He does not attribute to Falstaff the good temper flowing from inherent goodness and genuine mildness of disposition; for in company with those about whose good opinion he has little concern, though his vacuity of mind obliges him to have recourse to their company, he is often insolent and overbearing. It is chiefly with Prince Henry, and those whom he wishes, from vanity, or some selfish purpose, to think well of him, that he is most facetious.—The degree or real force of any quality is never so distinctly marked, as when it is put to the test by such trying circumstances as tend to destroy its existence. Shakespeare seems aware of this; and, in the
first

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first scene between the Prince and Falstaff, this part of the character is fully tried and displayed. The Prince attacks Falstaff in a contest of banter and raillery. The Knight for some time defends himself with dexterity and success. But the Prince's jests are more severe than witty; they suggest some harsh truths, and some well-founded terrors.—“*P. H.* The fortune
“of us that are the moon's men, doth ebb
“and flow like the sea, being governed as
“the sea is by the moon: now in as low
“an ebb as the foot of the ladder; and by
“and by in as high a flow as the ridge of
“the gallows.”—Such retorts are too serious. The Knight endeavours to reply; but he is overcome; he feels himself vanquished.

“*Falstaff.* S'blood, I am as melancholy
“as a gib cat, or a lugg'd bear.” But he is not fullen, nor morose. His melancholy, as he terms it, does not appear in ill-humour, but in a laboured and not very successful

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cessful attempt to be witty. He is desirous
 of seeming in good spirits, and embraces
 the first opportunity given him by the
 Prince, of recovering them.—“*Falstaff*.
 “S’blood, I am as melancholy as a gib
 “cat or a lugg’d bear.—*P. H.* Or an
 “old lion, or a lover’s lute.—*Falstaff*.
 “Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bag-
 “pipe.—*P. H.* What sayest thou to a
 “hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?
 “——*Falstaff*. Thou hast the most un-
 “savory similies, &c. But, Hal, I pray
 “thee, trouble me no more with vanity.
 “I would to God, thou and I knew where
 “a commodity of good names were to be
 “bought, &c. Thou hast done much
 “harm unto me, Hal; God forgive thee
 “for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew
 “nothing; and now am I, if a man should
 “speak truly, little better than one of the
 “wicked, &c.—*P. H.* Where shall we
 “take a purse to-morrow, Jack? —*Fal-*
 “*staff*. Where thou wilt, lad, I’ll make
 “one;

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 27

“one ; an’ I do not, call me villain, and
“baffle me.”

II. Having shewn that Falstaff possesses as much love of society, and as much good-temper as are consistent with the despicable passions of the sensualist ; and which, though agreeable, are not in him to be accounted virtuous ; I proceed to exemplify his intellectual endowments : and of these his talents for wit and humour are the most peculiar.

I. His wit is of various kinds. It is sometimes a play upon words.—“*Falstaff*.
“I call thee coward ! I’ll see thee damn’d,
“ere I call thee coward. But I would
“give a thousand pounds I could run as
“fast as thou canst. You are straight
“enough in the shoulders. You care not
“who sees your back. Call you that
“backing of your friends ? A plague upon
“such backing ! Give me them that will face
“me.”——It sometimes depends on felicity of allusion.—“*Falstaff*,” to Bardolph,
“Thou

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"Thou art our admiral, thou bearest the
 "lanthorn in the poop; but 'tis in the nose
 "of thee. Thou art the knight of the
 "burning lamp, &c. I never see thy face,
 "but I think on hell-fire, and Dives that
 "liv'd in purple, &c. O thou art a per-
 "petual triumph, an everlasting bonfire
 "light: When thou ran'st up Gads-hill,
 "in the night, to catch my horse; if I did
 "not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus,
 "or a ball of wild-fire, there is no pur-
 "chase in money." — One of the most
 agreeable species of wit, and which Falstaff
 uses with great success, is the ridiculous
 comparison. It consists in classing or unit-
 ing together, by similitude, objects that
 excite feelings so opposite as that some may
 be accounted great, and others little, some
 noble, and others mean: and this is done,
 when in their structure, appearance, or ef-
 fects, they have circumstances of resem-
 blance abundantly obvious when pointed
 out, though on account of the great dif-
 ference

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ference in their general impression, not usually attended to; but which being selected by the man of witty invention, as bonds of intimate union, enable him, by an unexpected connection, to produce surprise. Of this some of the preceding allusions, which are united with, or involve in them comparisons, are instances: but the following passage affords a more direct illustration.——“*Falstaff*,” speaking of Shallow, “I do remember him at Clement’s-inn, like a man made after supper with a cheese-paring. When he was naked, he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife.”——Another very exquisite species of wit consists in explaining great, serious, or important appearances, by inadequate and trifling causes *. This, if one may say so, is a grave and solemn species; and produces its effect by the affectation of formal and deep research.

* Elements of Criticism.

Falstaff

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Falstaff gives the following example: "A
"good sherris sack has a two-fold opera-
"tion: it ascends me into the brain: dries
"me there all the foolish, and dull, and
"crudy vapours, which environ it: makes
"it apprehensive, quick, forgetive: full of
"nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes;
"which delivered over to the voice (the
"tongue) which is the birth, becomes ex-
"cellent wit."

But Falstaff is not more distinguished
for wit than humour: and affords some
good illustrations of the difference between
them. Wit consists in the thought; and
produces its effect, namely laughter, or a
tendency to laughter, in whatsoever way,
and by whomsoever it may be spoken.
Humour again depends on action: it ex-
hibits something done; or something said
in a peculiar manner. The action or
the thing said may be in themselves indif-
ferent; but derive their power of exciting
laughter from the intention and mode of
doing

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doing or of saying them. Wit is permanent: it remains in the witty saying, by whomsoever it is said, and independent not only of persons, but of circumstances or situation. But in humour the action or saying is ineffectual, unless connected with the character, the intention, manner, or situation of some speaker or agent. The one seems to depend on connection, invented or displayed unexpectedly, between incongruous and dissonant objects, or parts of objects: the other in the invention or display of such connection between actions and manners incongruous to an occasion. The one presents combinations that may be termed ridiculous; the other such as are ludicrous. The incongruity and dissonance in both cases seem chiefly to respect, not so much the greatness or littleness, as the dignity and meanness, of the connected objects. The amusement is most complete, when the witty thought is expressed with humour. When this is
not

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not the case, though we discern the witty combination, we do not feel its entire effect. Among many others, the first scene between Falstaff and the Chief Justice is highly humorous. It contains no wit in the beginning, which is indeed the most amusing part of the dialogue: and the witticisms introduced in the conclusion, excepting the first or second puns, are neither of a superior kind, nor executed with great success. The Justice comes to reprove Falstaff: and the amusement consists in Falstaff's pretending, first of all, not to see him; and then, in pretending deafness, so as neither to understand his message, nor the purport of his conversation. — "*Ch.*

" *Jus.* Sir John Falstaff, a word with you.

" — *Falstaff.* My good lord! God give

" your lordship good time of day. I am

" glad to see your lordship abroad: I heard

" say your lordship was sick: I hope your

" lordship goes abroad by advice. —

" *Ch. Jus.* Sir John, I sent for you, before

" your

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 33

"your expedition to Shrewsbury. — *Fal.*

"*Ass.* If it please your lordship, I hear

"his majesty is returned with some dis-

"comfort from Wales. — *Ch. Jus.* I talk

"not of his majesty. You would not

"come when I sent for you. — *Fal.* And

"I hear, moreover, his highness is fallen

"into this same whoreson apoplexy. —

"*Ch. Jus.* Well, Heaven mend him. I

"pray, let me speak with you. — *Fal.*

"This apoplexy is, as I take it, a kind of

"lethargy, an't please your lordship; a

"kind of sleeping in the blood; a whore-

"son tingling. — *Ch. Jus.* What tell you

"me of it! be it as it is. — *Fal.* It hath

"its original in much grief; from study,

"and perturbation of the brain," &c. —

The Chief Justice becomes at length im-

patient, and compels Falstaff to hear and

give him a direct answer. But the Knight

is not without his resources. Driven out

of the strong hold of humour, he betakes

himself to the weapons of wit. — *Ch.*

D

"*Jus.*

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“ *Jus.* The truth is, Sir John, you live in
 “ great infamy. — *Fal.* He that buckles
 “ himself in my belt cannot live in less.
 “ — *Ch. Jus.* Your means are very slen-
 “ der, and your waste great. — *Fal.* I
 “ would it were otherwise. I would my
 “ means were greater, and my waist slen-
 “ derer.” — Falstaff is not unacquainted
 with the nature and value of his talents.
 He employs them not merely for the sake
 of merriment, but to promote some design.
 He wishes, by his drollery in this scene, to
 cajole the Chief Justice. In one of the fol-
 lowing acts, he practises the same artifice
 with the Prince of Lancaster. He fails,
 however, in his attempt: and that it was
 a studied attempt appears from his subse-
 quent reflections. “ Good faith, this same
 “ young sober-blooded boy doth not love
 “ me; nor a man cannot make him laugh.”
 That his pleasantry, whether witty or hu-
 morous, is often studied and premedi-
 tated, appears also from other passages. “ I
 “ will

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“will devise matter enough out of this
“Shallow to keep Prince Henry in conti-
“nual laughter. O you shall see him
“laugh, till his face be like a wet cloak ill
“laid up.”

It may also be remarked, that the guise or raiment, so to say, with which Falstaff invests those different species of wit and humour, is universally the same. It is grave, and even solemn. He would always appear in earnest. He does not laugh himself, unless compelled by a sympathetic emotion with the laughter of others. He may sometimes indeed indulge a smile of seeming contempt or indignation: but it is perhaps on no occasion when he would be witty or humorous. Shakespeare seems to have thought this particular of importance, and has therefore put it out of all doubt by making Falstaff himself inform us; “O it
“is much that a lie with a slight oath, and
“a jest with a *sad brow*, will do with a fel-

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"low that never had the ache in his shoulders."

As the wit of Falstaff is various, and finely blended with humour, it is also easy and genuine. It displays no quaint conceits, studied antitheses, or elaborate contrasts. Excepting in two or three instances, we have no far-fetched or unsuccessful puns. Neither has the poet recourse, for ludicrous situation, to frequent and disgusting displays of drunkenness: We have little or no swearing, and less obscenity than from the rudeness of the times and the condition of some of the other speakers we might have expected.—Much ridicule is excited by some of the other characters: but their wit, when they attempt to be witty, is different from that of Falstaff. Prince Henry's wit consists chiefly in banter and railery. In his satirical allusions, he is often more severe than pleasant. The wit of Pistol, if it be intended for wit, is altogether affected,

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affected, and is of a kind which Falstaff never displays. It is an affectation of pompous language ; an attempt at the mock-heroic ; and consists in employing inflated diction on common occasions. The speaker does not possess, but aim at wit ; and, for want of other resources, endeavours to procure a laugh by odd expressions, and an absurd application of learned and lofty phrases.

“ Dost thou thirst, base Trojan,

“ To have me fold up Parca's fatal web ?”

Falstaff's page being only a novice, attempts to be witty after the inflated manner of Pistol: but being supposed to have profited by his master's example, he is more successful, and his pompous phrases have a witty meaning. — “ *Page*” to Bardolph, “ Away, “ thou rascally Althea's dream ! away ! — “ *P. H.* Instruct us, boy ; what dream, “ boy ? — *Page.* Marry, my lord, Althea “ dreamed she was delivered of a fire- “ brand ; and therefore I call him her
D 3
“ dream.”

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“dream.”——The laughter excited by the rest of Falstaff’s associates, is not by the wit or humour of the speaker, but by ludicrous situation, ridiculous views of peculiar manners, and the absurd misapplication of language. Thus in the admirable and instructive account given by the hostess of Falstaff’s death——“Nay, sure he’s not in
“hell; he’s in Arthur’s bosom, if ever man
“went to Arthur’s bosom. He made a finer
“end, and went away an’ it had been any
“Christom’d child; a’ parted even just be-
“tween twelve and one, even at the turn-
“ing o’ the tide: for after I saw him
“fumble with the sheets, and play with
“flowers, and smile upon his finger’s ends,
“I knew there was but one way; for his
“nose was as sharp as a pen. How now,
“Sir John? quoth I: what, man, be of
“good cheer: so ’a cried out, God, God,
“God, three or four times. Now I, to
“comfort him, bid him a’ should not think
“of God; I hoped there was no need to
“trouble

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“trouble himself with any such thoughts
“yet : so a’ bade me lay more cloaths on
“his feet. I put my hand into the bed,
“and felt them ; and they were as cold as
“a stone ; then I felt to his knees, and so
d “upward, and upward ; and all was as cold
“as any stone.”

2. The other intellectual talents attributed by our poet to Sir John Falstaff, are discernment of character, versatility, and dexterity in the management of mankind ; a discernment, however, and a dexterity of a peculiar and limited species ; limited to the power of discerning whether or not men may be rendered fit for his purposes ; and to the power of managing them as the instruments of his enjoyment.

We may remark his discernment of mankind, and his dexterity in employing them, in his conduct towards the Prince, to Shallow, and his inferior associates.—He flatters the Prince, but he uses such flattery as is intended to impose on a person of understanding.

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standing. He flatters him indirectly. He seems to treat him with familiarity : he affects to be displeased with him : he rallies him ; and contends with him in the field of wit. When he gives praise, it is insinuated ; or it seems reluctant, accidental, and extorted by the power of truth. In like manner, when he would impress him with a belief of his affectionate and firm attachment, he proceeds by insinuation ; he would have it appear involuntary, the effect of strong irresistible impulse ; so strong as to appear preternatural. “ If the rascal hath not given me medicines to make me love him, I’ll be hang’d.” Yet his aim is not merely to please the Prince : it is to corrupt and govern him ; and to make him bend to his purposes, and become the instrument of his pleasures. He makes the attempt : he seizes, what he thinks a good opportunity, by charging him with cowardice at the encounter of Gads-hill : he is desirous of finding him a coward ; pushes his

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his attack as far as possible; suffers sudden repulse: but with great versatility and address retires to his former fastness. —

“*Falstaff*. Are you not a coward? answer me that: and Poins there? — *P. H.*

“Ye fat paunch, an’ ye call me coward,

“I’ll stab thee. — *Falstaff*. I call thee

“coward! I’ll see thee damned ere I call

“thee coward. But I would give a thou-

“sand pounds I could run as fast as thou

“canst, &c.” — His behaviour to Shallow

and Slender is different, because their cha-

acters are different. He fathoms them,

and steers a corresponding course. He

treats them at first with such deference as

he would render to men of sense and condi-

tion. He tries whether or no it be possible

to allure them by his usual artifice; he is

good-humoured, social, and witty. But

the wit he tries upon them is of his lowest

kind: and he has no occasion for any other.

They are delighted, and express admiration.

“ — *Falstaff*. Is thy name Mouldy?

—— “*Mouldy*.

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"——*Mouldy*. Yea, an't please you.——

"*Falstaff*. It is the more time thou wert

"used:——*Shallow*. Ha! ha! ha! most

"excellent, I'faith: things that are mouldy

"lack use. Well said, Sir John, very well

"said." He thus penetrates into their cha-

acter, and conducts himself in a suitable

manner. He no longer gives himself the

trouble of amusing them. He is no longer

witty: he affects the dignity of a great man,

and is sparing of his conversation. "I do

"see the bottom," says he, "of Justice

"Shallow." Meanwhile Shallow and Slen-

der become in their turns solicitous of pleas-

ing *him*: they believe him a man of great

consequence: they think even of making

him *their* dupe, and of employing him as the

engine of their petty ambition. He indul-

ges their folly, lets them entangle themselves

in the snare; endures their conversation, and

does them the signal honor of borrowing a

thousand pounds.—His treatment of his

hostess and Bardolph is no less dexterous;

but

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but from the ascendant he has obtained, it is not so difficult, and is managed by the poet in the most inoffensive manner.

3. Another kind of ability displayed by our hero, is the address with which he defies detection and extricates himself out of difficulty. He is never at a loss. His presence of mind never forsakes him. Having no sense of character, he is never troubled with shame. Though frequently detected, or in danger of detection, his inventive faculty never sleeps; it is never totally overwhelmed: or if it be surprised into a momentary intermission of its power, it forthwith recovers, and supplies him with fresh resources. He is furnished with palliatives and excuses for every emergency. Besides other effects produced by this display of ability, it tends to amuse and excite laughter: for we are amused by the application of inadequate and ridiculous causes. Of the talent now mentioned we have many instances. Thus when detected by Prince Henry

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Henry in his boastful pretensions to courage, he tells him that he knew him. "Was it for me," says he, "to kill the heir-apparent?" So also in another scene, when he is detected in his abuse of the Prince, and overheard even by the Prince himself. "No abuse, Ned, in the world; honest Ned, none. I dispraised him before the wicked, that the wicked might not fall in love with him."—In the admirable scene where he is detected in falsely and injuriously charging his hostess with having picked his pocket of some very valuable articles, whereas the theft was chiefly of the ludicrous tavern-bill formerly mentioned, his escape is singularly remarkable. He does not justify himself by any plea of innocence. He does not colour nor palliate his offence. He cares not what baseness may be imputed to himself: all that he desires is, that others may not be spotless. If he can make them appear base, so much the better. For how can they blame him, if they themselves are blameable? On the present

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present occasion he has some opportunity. He sees and employs it. The Prince, in rifling his pocket, had descended to an undignified action. The trespass indeed was slight, and Falstaff could not reckon it otherwise. But Prince Henry, possessing the delicacies of honor, felt it with peculiar acuteness. Falstaff, aware of this, employs the Prince's feelings as a counterpart to his own baseness, and is successful. It is on this particular point, though not usually attended to, because managed with much address, that his present resource depends.—“*P. H.* Thou sayest true, “Hostess, and he slanders thee most grossly. “*Host.* So doth he you, my lord; and “said this day you ow’d him a thousand “pound.—“*P. H.* Sirrah, do I owe you a “thousand pound?—“*Falstaff.* A thousand pound, Hal? a million: thy love is “worth a million: thou owest me thy love. “—“*Host.* Nay, my lord, he called you “Jack, and said he would cudgel you.—

Falstaff.

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" *Falstaff*. Did I, Bardolph? — *Bardolph*.

" Indeed, Sir John, you said so. — *Fal-*

" *staff*. Yea, if he said my ring was cop-

" per. — *P. H.* I say 'tis copper. Dar'ft

" thou be as good as thy word now? —

" *Falstaff*. Why, Hal, thou knowest, as

" thou art but a man, I dare; but as thou

" art a Prince, I fear thee, as I fear the

" roaring of the lion's whelp. — *P. H.*

" And why not as the lion? — *Falstaff*.

" The King himself is to be fear'd as the

" lion; dost thou think I'll fear thee as I

" fear thy father? Nay, if I do, let my

" girdle break! — *P. H.* O, if it should,

" how would thy guts fall about thy knees!

" But, Sirrah, there's no room for faith,

" truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine;

" it is all filled up with guts and midriff.

" Charge an honest woman with picking

" thy pocket! why, thou whoreson, impu-

" dent, imbossed rascal, if there were

" any thing in thy pocket but tavern reck-

" onings, memorandums of bawdy-houses,

" and

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“and one poor penny-worth of sugar-
 “candy to make thee long-winded ; if thy
 “pocket were enriched with any other in-
 “juries but these, I am a villain ; and yet
 “you will stand to it, you will not pocket
 “up wrongs. Art thou not ashamed ?
 “—— *Falstaff*. Dost thou hear, Hal ?
 “thou knowest in the state of innocency
 “Adam fell ; and what should poor Jack
 “Falstaff do in the days of villany ? Thou
 “seest I have more flesh than another man,
 “and therefore more frailty.” Then he
 adds, after an emphatic pause, and no
 doubt with a pointed application in the
 manner :——“ *You* confess then that *you*
 “picked my pocket ?” Prince Henry’s
 reply is very remarkable. It is not direct :
 it contains no longer any raillery or re-
 proach ; it is almost a shuffling answer, and
 may be supposed to have been spoken after,
 or with some conscious confusion :——“ It
 “appears so,” says he, “from the story.”
Falstaff pushes him no further ; but expres-
 ses

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fes his triumph, under the shew of moderation and indifference, in his address to the hostess.——“Hostess, I forgive thee; go, “make ready breakfast; love thy husband; “look to thy servants; and cherish thy “guests: thou shalt find me tractable to “any honest reason: thou seest I am pacified still.”—I shall illustrate this particular circumstance in one other instance, not only because it is in itself curious; but tends to elucidate what may, without impropriety, be termed the catastrophe. Falstaff having imposed upon Shallow, borrows from him a thousand pounds. He has imposed upon him, by making him believe that his influence with the Prince, now King Henry, was all-powerful. Here the poet’s good sense, his sense of propriety, his judgment, and invention, are indeed remarkable. It was not for a person so sensual, so cowardly, so arrogant, and so selfish as Falstaff, to triumph in his deceitful arts. But his punishment must be suitable. He is not a criminal

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criminal like Richard ; and his recompence must be different. Detection, disappointment in his fraudulent purposes, and the downfall of assumed importance, will satisfy poetical justice : and for such retribution, even from his earliest appearance, we see due preparation. The punishment is to be the result of his conduct, and to be accomplished by a regular progress *.—Falstaff, who was studious of imposing on others, imposes upon himself. He becomes the dupe of his own artifice. Confident in his versatility, command of temper, presence of mind, and unabashed invention ; encouraged too by the notice of the Prince, and thus flattering himself that he shall have some sway in his counsels, he lays the foundation of his own disappointment. Though the flatterer and parasite of Prince Henry, he does not deceive him. The Prince is thoroughly acquainted with his character, and

* Butler's Analogy.

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is aware of his views. Yet in his wit, humour, and invention he finds amusement. —Parasites, in the works of other poets, are the flatterers of weak men, and impress them with a belief of their merit or attachment. But Falstaff is the parasite of a person distinguished for ability or understanding. The Prince sees him in his real colours ; yet, for the sake of present pastime, he suffers himself to seem deceived ; and allows the parasite to flatter himself that his arts are not unsuccessful. The real state of his sentiments and feelings is finely described, when at the battle of Shrewsbury, seeing Falstaff lying among some dead bodies, he supposes him dead. “ What ! old acquaintance ! could not all this flesh
“ keep in a little life ? Poor Jack, farewell. I could have better spared a better
“ man : O I should have a heavy miss of
“ thee, if I were much in love with vanity.” But Prince Henry is not much in love with vanity. By his accession to
the

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the throne he feels himself under new obligations ; and under the necessity of relinquishing improper pursuits. As he forms his resolution considerately, he adheres to it strictly. He does not hesitate, nor tamper with inclination. He does not gradually loosen, but bursts his fetters. “ He casts no longing lingering look behind.” He forsakes every mean pursuit, and discards every worthless dependent. But he discards them with humanity : it is to avoid their influence, for all wise men avoid temptation ; it is not to punish, but to correct their vices.

“ I banish thee, on pain of death,
“ Not to come near our person by ten miles !
“ For competence of life I will allow you,
“ That lack of means enforce you not to evil :
“ And as we hear you do reform yourselves,
“ We will, according to your strengths and qualities,
“ Give you advancement.”

Thus in the self-deceit of Falstaff, and

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in the discernment of Henry, held out to us on all occasions, we have a natural foundation for the catastrophe. The incidents too, by which it is accomplished, are judiciously managed. None of them are foreign or external, but grow, as it were, out of the characters.

Falstaff brings Shallow to London to see and profit by his influence at court. He places himself in King Henry's way, as he returns from the coronation. He addresses him with familiarity; is neglected; persists, and is repulsed with sternness. His hopes are unexpectedly baffled: his vanity blasted: he sees his importance with those whom he had deceived completely ruined: he is for a moment unmasked: he views himself as he believes he appears to them: he sees himself in the mirror of their conception: he runs over the consequences of his humiliation: he translates their thoughts and their opinions concerning him: he speaks

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 53

to them in the tone of the sentiments which he attributes to them ; and in the language which he thinks they would hold.

“ Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.” It is not that in his abase-

ment he feels a transient return of virtue :

it is rather that he sees himself for a mo-

ment helpless : he sees his assumed impor-

tance destroyed ; and, among other conse-

quences, that restitution of the sum he had

borrowed will be required. This alarms

him ; and Shallow’s answer gives him small

consolation. He is roused from his sud-

den amazement : looks about for resour-

ces : and immediately finds them. His in-

genuity comes instantly to his aid ; and he

tells Shallow, with great readiness and

plausibility of invention, “ Do not you

“ grieve at this ? I shall be sent for in pri-

“ vate to him : look you, he must seem

“ thus to the world. Fear not your ad-

“ vancement. I will be the man yet that

“ shall make you great, &c. This that

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“ you heard was but a colour, &c. Go
“ with me to dinner. Come, lieutenant
“ Pistol ; come, Bardolph ; I shall be sent
“ for soon at night.”

Thus Shakespeare, whose morality is no less sublime than his skill in the display of character is masterly and unrivalled, represents Falstaff, not only as a voluptuous and base sycophant, but totally incorrigible. He displays no quality or disposition which can serve as a basis for reformation. Even his abilities and agreeable qualities contribute to his depravity. Had he been less facetious, less witty, less dexterous, and less inventive, he might have been urged to self-condemnation, and so inclined to amendment. But mortification leads him to no conviction of folly, nor determines him to any change of life. He turns, as soon as possible, from the view given him of his baseness ; and rattles as it were in triumph, the fetters of habituated and willing bondage.—Lear, violent and impetuous,

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF. 55

impetuous, but yet affectionate; from his misfortunes derives improvement. Macbeth, originally a man of feeling, is capable of remorse. And the understanding of Richard, rugged and insensible though he be, betrays his heart to the assault of conscience. But the mean sensualist, incapable of honorable and worthy thoughts, is irretrievably lost; totally, and for ever depraved. An important and awful lesson!

I may be thought perhaps to have treated Falstaff with too much severity. I am aware of his being a favorite. Persons of eminent worth feel for him some attachment, and think him hardly used by the King. But if they will allow themselves to examine the character in all its parts, they will perhaps agree with me, that such feeling is delusive, and arises from partial views. They will not take it amiss, if I say that they are deluded in the same manner with Prince Henry. They are amused, and conceive an impro-

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per attachment to the means of their pleasure and amusement. I appeal to every candid reader, whether the sentiment expressed by Prince Henry is not that which every judicious Spectator and reader is inclined to feel.

“ I could have better spar'd a better man.”

Upon the whole, the character of Sir John Falstaff, consisting of various parts, produces various feelings. Some of these are agreeable and some disagreeable : but, being blended together, the general and united effect is much stronger than if their impulse had been disunited : not only so, but as the agreeable qualities are brought more into view, for in this sense alone they can be said to prevail in the character ; and as the deformity of other qualities is often veiled by the pleasantry employed by the poet in their display, the general effect is in the highest degree delightful.

57
ON
SHAKESPEARE'S
IMITATION OF
FEMALE CHARACTERS,

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

I CANNOT agree with you, that Shakespeare has exerted more ability in his imitation of male, than of female characters. Before you form a decided opinion on a subject so interesting to his reputation, let me request your attention to the following particulars. If you consider them at all, it will be with candour: and with so much the more attention, that they are in favour of a Poet whom you admire, and, I might add, of a sex whom you adore. If Shakespeare, with those embellishments which we expect in poetry, has allotted to the females on his theatre such
stations

stations as are suitable to their condition in society, and delineated them with sufficient discrimination, he has done all that we have any right to require. According to this measure, and this measure alone, we are permitted to judge of him.—I will not, you see, be indebted to the facile apologist you mention, who admits the charge; but pleads in extenuation of the offence, that Shakespeare did not bring forward his female characters into a full and striking light, “because female players were in his time unknown.” His defence must rest upon critical principles: and if, “with those embellishments which we expect in poetry, he has allotted to the females on his theatre, such stations as are suitable to their situation in society; and if he has delineated them with sufficient discrimination, he has done all that we have any right to require.” I will now endeavour to shew, that he has fulfilled both these conditions.

I. Diversity

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I. Diversity of character depends a good deal on diversity of situation : and situations are diversified by variety of employment. We meet, for example, with less variety in the occupations of mankind in countries governed by despots, and unacquainted with trade and manufactures, than among nations that are free and commercial. The slaves of the despot display no greater diversity than depends upon the difference between poverty and riches : for their modes of education never affect the mind ; they extend no farther than to superinduce a varnish of external urbanity ; and confer some grace or pliancy in the management of the body. It would be a difficult enterprize, in a free country, to raise an illiterate and ignorant peasant from the lowest order to a distinguished rank in the state : but under some despotic governments, persons with no other instruction than what regulates attitude, gesture, and some forms of external propriety, may
be

be exalted even to gorgeous pre-eminence.—If situation influence the mind, and if uniformity of conduct be frequently occasioned by uniformity of condition ; there must be greater diversity of male than of female characters. The employments of women, compared with those of men, are few ; their condition, and of course their manners, admit of less variety. The poet, therefore, whether epic or dramatic, who would exhibit his heroines in occupations that did not properly belong to them ; or who endeavoured to distinguish them by a greater diversity of habits, endowments, or dispositions than their condition justified, would depart from the truth of nature ; and, instead of meriting the praise of due decoration, would incur the blame of extravagant fiction. I say not that the abilities and dispositions in both sexes may not be equal or alike. There are few attainments in knowledge in which the pride of the male sex

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 61

sex may not be alarmed, if such alarm be decent, by the progress of fair competitors: and the history of modern Europe will attest, that even politics, a science of which men are particularly jealous, is not without the reach of adventurous females*. Difference, however, of condition restrains the exertion of female genius; and must limit the display both of talents and dispositions.

Add to this, that the condition of women has been more restrained in some periods than in others. In times of great rudeness, the wives † and daughters of the fierce barbarian are domestic slaves. Even in civilized nations, if polygamy be permitted, and no restraint imposed on the licentiousness of divorce, the fair-sex may

* The paths of criticism also (as must be well known to the lovers of Shakespeare, who cannot be unacquainted with Mrs. Montague's Essay) have been successfully explored by female footsteps.

† Millar's Distinction of Ranks.

be

be loved, if the passions of those who grant themselves such indulgence may be honoured with the appellation of love ; but can never rise to esteem *. They may contribute to the amusement or convenience, but can never be the companions of men. In all situations whatever, where the tendency to extreme profligacy becomes very flagrant, the respect due to the female virtues, and confidence in female affection, decline and decay. So great are the obligations of the fair-sex to those institutions, which, more than any other, by limiting the freedom of divorce, and by other proper restrictions, have asserted the dignity of the female character ! Polished and even refined as were the manners of Athens and of Rome, the rank allowed to Athenian and Roman women was never so dignified, nor so suitable, in either of these republics, as among the nations of Chris-

* Καὶ γὰρ γυνὴ εἰς χρηστὴν καὶ δούλοσ. Καὶ τοὶ γὰρ ἰσὰς πάντων, τὸ μὲν χεῖρον, &c. Arist. Poet.

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 63

tendom.—But as the subjects of dramatic poetry, and particularly of tragedy, are most commonly furnished by rude, remote, or antient ages, the poet must submit to such limitation, in his views of human life, as the manners of such periods require. And if Shakespeare, like the great poets of antiquity, has not given his females so much to do, or displayed them as expressing all the violence of passion, or rendered them of so much importance in the conduct of dramatic events, as may have been done by his brethren of later times; he and the poets of antiquity have, in this instance at least, given a more faithful, and not a less interesting representation of that nature which they chose to display.

II. I proceed still farther, and venture to assert, that there is not only as much variety in Shakespeare's female characters as we have any title to demand; but that they are distinguished with peculiar and appropriated

appropriated features. Let some of them pass in review before you. If you find in Miranda, Isabella, Beatrice, and Portia, variety and discrimination enough, they may answer for their numerous sisterhood: nor need we, on the present occasion, evoke the spirits of Queen Margaret or Dame Quickly, Juliet or Desdemona.

I. In the character of Miranda, simplicity is intended to be the most striking circumstance. Consistent, however, with simplicity, is gentleness of disposition, flowing out in compassionate tenderness, and unrestrained by suspicion, Miranda, seeing the danger of shipwrecked strangers, never supposes that they may be suffering punishment for heinous guilt, but expresses the most amiable commiseration:

"If by your art, my dearest father, you have

"Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them:

"O I have suffer'd

"With those that I saw suffer."

Conscious

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 65

Conscious of no guile in herself, conscious of native truth, she believes that others are equally guileless, and reposes confidence in their professions. Her easy belief does not proceed from weakness; but from innate candour, and an ingenuous undismayed propensity, which had never been abused or insulted. If her simplicity and inexperience had rendered her shy and timid, the representation might have been reckoned natural: but Shakespeare has exhibited a more delicate picture. Miranda, under the care of a wise and affectionate father, an utter stranger to the rest of mankind, unacquainted with deceit either in others, or in herself, is more inclined to ingenuous confidence than to shy or reserved suspicion.—Moved in like manner by tender and ingenuous affection, she never practises dissimulation, never disguises her intention, either in the view of heightening the love or of trying the veracity of the person whom she prefers. All these particulars

F

are

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are distinctly illustrated in the exquisite love-scene between Ferdinand and Miranda.

"*Fer.* Admir'd Miranda,

"Indeed the top of admiration: worth

"What's dearest to the world! &c.

"*Mir.* I do not know

"One of my sex; no woman's face remember," &c.

Thus simple, apt to wonder, guileless, and because guileless of easy belief, compassionate and tender, Miranda exhibits not only a consistent, but a singular, and finely distinguished character.

2. Isabella is represented equally blameless, amiable, and affectionate: she is particularly distinguished by intellectual ability. Her understanding and good-sense are conspicuous: her arguments are well-applied, and her pleading persuasive. Yet her abilities do not offend by appearing too masculine: they are mitigated and finely blended with female softness. If she venture to argue, it is to save the life of a brother.

Even

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 67

Even then, it is with such reluctance, hesitation, and diffidence, as need to be urged and encouraged.

“ Luc. To him again, intreat him,

“ Kneel down before him, &c.

“ Isab. O it is excellent

“ To have a giant’s strength : but it is tyrannous

“ To use it like a giant.

“ Luc. That’s well said.”

The transitions in Isabella’s pleadings are natural and affecting. Her introduction is timid and irresolute.

Lucio tells her,

“ If you should need a pin,

“ You could not with more lame a tongue desire it.

“ To him, I say.”

Thus prompted, she makes an effort ; she speaks from her immediate feelings : she has not acquired boldness enough to enter the lists of argument ; and addresses him merely as a suppliant :

“ Not the king’s crown nor the deputed sword

“ The marshal’s truncheon nor the judge’s robe,

“ Become them with one half so good a grace,

“ As mercy does.”

Animated by her exertion, she becomes more assured, and ventures to refute objections. As she is a nun, and consequently acquainted with religious knowledge, the argument she employs is suited to her profession.

"If. Why, all the souls that are, were forfeit once,
 And he that might the vantage best have took,
 Found out the remedy."

At length, no longer abashed and irresolute, but fully collected, she reasons, so to say, on the merits of the cause.

"Good, good, my lord, bethink you
 "Who is it that hath died for this offence?
 "There's many have committed it."

Nor is her argument unbecoming in the mouth even of a nun. Her subsequent conduct vindicates her own character from aspersion. Besides, she had with great delicacy and propriety, at the beginning of her pleading, expressed herself in such a manner, as to obviate any charge.

"There

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 69

"There is a vice that I do most abhor,
"And most desire should meet the blow of justice,
"For which I would not plead but that I must."

Emboldened by truth, and the feeling of good intention, she passes, at the end of her debate, from the merits of the cause, to a spirited appeal even to the consciousness of her judge.

"Go to your bosom,
"Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
"Like to your brother's fault."

Isabella is not only sensible and persuasive, but sagacious, and capable of becoming address. In communicating to her brother the unworthy designs of Angelo, she seems aware of his weakness; she is not rash nor incautious, but gives her intimation by degrees, and with studied dexterity.

It is not inconsistent with her gentleness, modesty, and reserve, that, endowed as she is with understanding, and strongly impressed with a sense of duty, she should

form resolutions respecting her own conduct without reluctance, and adhere to them without wavering. Though tenderly attached to her brother, she spurns, without hesitation, the alternative proposed by Angelo, and never balances in her choice.

Neither is it incongruous, but a fine tint in the character, that she feels indignation, and expresses it strongly. But it is not indignation against an adversary; it is not on account of injury; it is a disinterested emotion: it is against a brother who does not respect himself; who expresses pusillanimous sentiments; and would have her act in an unworthy manner.—Such is the amiable, pious, sensible, resolute, determined, and eloquent Isabella. She pleads powerfully for her brother; and no less powerfully for her poetical father.

3. But if the gentle, unsuspecting, and artless simplicity of Miranda; if the good sense and affecting eloquence of Isabella, should not induce you to acquit the poet,
you

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 71

you will yield, perhaps, to the vivacity and wit of Beatrice.—No less amiable and affectionate than Miranda and Isabella, she expresses resentment, because she feels commiseration for the sufferings of her friend.

“Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, and dishonoured my kinswoman?” Like Isabella, too, she is distinguished by intellectual ability; but of a different kind. She does not defend herself, or make her attacks with grave, argumentative, and persuasive elocution; but, endowed with the powers of wit, she employs them in raillery, banter, and repartee. “*Ben.*

“What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?—*Be.* Is it possible Disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed upon, as signor Benedick.”—
 “The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as a civil orange, and something of that jealous complexion”—Her smartness,

however, proceeds from wit rather than from humour. She does not attempt, or is not so successful in ludicrous description, as in lively sayings. "*Bea.* My cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.—*Claud.* And so she does, cousin." —*Beat.* Good lord for alliance! thus goes every one to the world, but I, and I am sun-burned; I may fit in a corner, and cry heigh-ho for a husband.—*Pe.* Lady. "Beatrice, I will get you one.—*Beat.* I would rather have one of your father's getting."

Another distinction, not unconnected with the preceding, is, that though lively, she is nevertheless serious, and though witty, grave. Possessed of talents for wit, she seems to employ them for the purposes of defence or disguise. She conceals the real and thoughtful seriousness of her disposition by a shew of vivacity. Howsoever she may speak of them, she treats her own concerns, and those of her friends, with

grave

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 73

grave consideration. A compliment, and the enticement of a playful allusion, almost betrays her into an actual confession. "*Ped.*

"In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

"—*Beat.* Yea, my lord, I thank it: poor
"fool, it keeps on the windy side of care."

She is desirous of being reputed very sprightly and disdainful: but it is not of the qualities which we chiefly possess that we are usually most ostentatious. Congreve wished to be thought a fine gentleman; Swift would be a politician; and Milton a divine. What Beatrice, who is really amiable, would have herself thought to be, appears in the following passage, where Hero, pretending not to know she was present, describes her in her own hearing.

"Nature never form'd a female heart

"Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.

"Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,

"Misprizing what they look on," &c.

Tender, affectionate, and ingenuous; yet
conscious

conscious of more weakness than Miranda, or not like her educated in a desert island, she is aware of mankind, affects to be mirthful when she is most in earnest, and employs her wit when she is most afraid. —Nor is such dissimulation, if it may be so termed, to be accounted peculiarly characteristical of female manners. It may be discovered in men of probity and tenderness, and who are actuated by serious principles; but who are rendered timid, either from some conscious imbecility; or who become suspicious by an early, too early an observation of designing persons. If such men are endowed with so much liveliness of invention, as, in the society to which they belong, to be reckoned witty or humorous, they often employ this talent as an engine of defence. Without it, they would perhaps fly from society, like the melancholy Jacques, who wished to have, but did not possess, a very distinguished, though some, portion of such ability.

Thus,

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 75

Thus, while they seem to annoy, they only wish to prevent : their mock encounter is a real combat : while they seem for ever in the field, they conceive themselves always besieged : though perfectly serious, they never appear in earnest : and though they affect to set all men at defiance ; and though they are not without understanding, yet they tremble for the censure, and are tortured with the sneer of a fool. Let them come to the school of Shakespeare. He will give *them*, as he gives many others, an useful lesson. He will shew them an exemplary and natural reformation or exertion. Beatrice is not to be ridiculed out of an honorable purpose ; nor to forfeit, for fear of a witlefs joke, a connection with a person who is “ of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty.”

4. Portia is a-kin both to Beatrice and Isabella. She resembles them both in gentleness of disposition. Like Beatrice, she
is

is spirited, lively, and witty. Her description of some of her lovers, is an obvious illustration. "First, there is the Neapolitan prince," &c. Her vivacity, however, is not so brilliant, and approaches rather to sportive ingenuity than to wit. Her situation renders her less grave, when in a serious mood, than Isabella: but, like her, she has intellectual endowment. She is observant, penetrating, and acute. Her address is dexterous, and her apprehension extensive. Though exposed to circumstances that might excite indignation, she never betrays any violent emotion, or unbecoming expression of anger. But Isabella, on account of her religious seclusion, having had less intercourse with the world, though of a graver, and apparently of a more sedate disposition, expresses her displeasure with reproach; and inveighs with the holy wrath of a cloister. To the acquaintance which both of them have of theology, I'ortia superadds some knowledge of law; and displays

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 77

displays a dexterity of evasion, along with an ingenuity in detecting a latent or unobserved meaning, which do her no discredit as a barrister. We may observe too, that the principal business in the Merchant of Venice is conducted by Portia. Nor is it foreign to remark, that as in the intimacy of Rosalind and Celia, Shakespeare has represented female friendship as no visionary attainment; so he has, by the mouth of Portia, expressed some striking particulars in the nature of that amiable connection.

“ In companions

“ That do converse, and waste the time together,

“ Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,

“ There must needs be a like proportion

“ Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit.”

5. Our poet, in his Cordelia, has given us a fine example of exquisite sensibility, governed by reason, and guided by a sense of propriety. This amiable character, indeed, is conceived and executed with no less skill and invention than that of her father.

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ther. Treated with rigour and injustice by Lear, she utters no violent resentment ; but expresses becoming anxiety for reputation.

" I yet beseech your majesty,
 " That you make known
 " It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
 " No unchaste action or dishonor'd step,
 " That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favor."

She displays the same gentleness, accompanied with much delicacy of reproof, in her reply to a mercenary lover.

" Peace be with Burgundy !
 " Since that respects of fortune are his love,
 " I shall not be his wife."

Even to her sisters, though she has perfect discernment of their characters, and though her misfortune was owing to their dissimulation, she shows nothing virulent nor unbecoming. She expresses, however, in a suitable manner, and with no improper irony, a sense of their deceit, and apprehensions of their disaffection to Lear.

" Ye

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 79

"Ye jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes

"Cordelia leaves you; I know what you are,

"And like a sister am most loth to call

"Your faults as they are nam'd."

Towards the close of the tragedy, when she receives complete information concerning the violent outrages committed against her father, the sufferings he has undergone, the ruin of his understanding, and has the fullest evidence of the guilt and atrocity of her sisters, she preserves the same consistency of character: notwithstanding her wrongs, she feels and is affected with the deepest sorrow for the misfortunes of Lear: she has the most entire abhorrence of the temper displayed by Goneril and Regan: yet her sorrows, her resentment, and indignation are guided by that sense of propriety, which does not in the smallest degree impair her tenderness and sensibility; but directs them to that conduct and demeanour, which are suitable, amiable, and interesting. Tenderness, affection, and sensibility, melting into grief, and mingled with sentiments
of

30 SHAKESPEARE'S

of reluctant disapprobation, were never delineated with more delicacy than in the description of Cordelia, when she receives intelligence of her father's misfortunes.

"*Kent.* Did your letters pierce the queen? any demonstration of grief?"

"*Gent.* I say she took 'em, read 'em in my presence;
"And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
"Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
"Over her passion, which most rebel like
"Sought to be king over her."

"*Kent.* O then it moved her.

"*Gent.* But no rage. Patience and sorrow strove
"Which should express her goodliest: you have seen
"Sun-shine and rain at once. Those happiest smiles
"That played on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
"What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence,
"As pearls from diamonds dropt.—In brief,
"Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
"If all could so become it."

"*Kent.* Made she no verbal question?"

"*Gent.* Once or twice
"She heav'd the name of father
"Pantingly forth, as if it prest her heart,
"Cry'd, Sisters! Sisters! What? i'th' storm of night?
"Let pity ne'er believe it! then she snook

"The

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 81

“ The holy water from her heav’nly eyes,
 “ And then retir’d to deal with grief alone.”

Minds highly enlightened, contemplating the same object, both reason and are affected in a similar manner. The tone of thought in the following passage, in ‘ The ‘ Theory of Moral Sentiments,’ accords perfectly with Shakespeare’s account of Cordelia. ‘ What noble propriety and grace do we feel in the conduct of those who, in their own case, exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into? We are disgusted with that clamorous grief; which, without any delicacy, calls upon our compassion with sighs and importunate lamentations. But we reverence that reserved, that silent and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes, in the quivering of the lips and cheeks, and in the distant but affecting coldness of the whole behaviour.

G

viour. It imposes the like silence upon us. We regard it with respectful attention, and watch with anxious concern over our whole behaviour, lest by any impropriety we should disturb that concerted tranquillity, which it requires so great an effort to support.'—Cordelia, full of affection, feels for the distress of her father: her sense of propriety imposes restraint on her expressions of sorrow: the conflict is painful: full of sensibility, and of a delicate structure; the conflict is more than she can endure; she must indulge her emotions: her sense of propriety again interposes; she must vent them in secret, and not with loud lamentation.

“ She shakes

“ The holy water from her heavenly eyes,

“ And then retires to deal with grief alone.”

There are few instances in any poet, where the influences of contending emotions are so nicely balanced and distinguished: for while in this amiable picture we discern the corrected severity of
that

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 83

that behaviour which a sense of propriety dictates, mitigated and brought down by fine sensibility, and the softness of the female character ; we also see this softness upheld, and this sensibility rendered still more engaging, by the influences of a sense of propriety.

Need I add to these illustrations, the sisterly and filial affections of Ophelia, leading her to such deference for a father, as to practise deceit at his suggestion on a generous lover, and strive to entangle him in the toils of political cunning ? Need I add the pride, the violence, the abilities, and the disappointed ambition of Margaret ? Need I add Dame Quickly and Lady Anne ?—If, notwithstanding all these, you persist in saying that Shakespeare has produced no eminent female characters, because, in the words of the poet whom you quote ‘ most women have no character at all ;’ you must mean in the spirit or manner of the satirist, and with an eye to the personage last-mentioned, to pun rather than to refute.

84 SHAKESPEARE'S

But you tell me—"the gentle Desdemona is like the gentle Cordelia; the tender Imogen like the tender Juliet; the sensible Isabella like the sensible Portia; the violent Margaret like the violent Constance; and the cruel Regan like the cruel Goneril: in short, that they are all copies of one another; that any differences appearing between them are occasioned by difference of external circumstances; that Portia, in Isabella's situation, would have been another Isabella: and so with the rest."—If this be urged as an objection, it cannot be admitted. Desdemona, in the same situation with Margaret, would not have inveighed, nor vented imprecation. Cordelia was situated in the same circumstances with Regan, but performed a very different part. Notwithstanding the similarity in the instances above-mentioned, there is still so much diversity as to obviate the objection.—Still further, if you reason in this manner, allow me to say, in the words of the

FEMALE CHARACTERS. 85

the poet, you reason "too curiously:" and would reduce the sum of dramatic characters, how different soever their names and fortunes, to an inconsiderable number. Does it not strike you, too, that to disregard such discrimination as proceeds from external condition, is contrary to the truth of nature, and the justice of impartial criticism? Many persons may have received from nature similar talents and dispositions; but being differently placed in society, they exert the same power, or gratify the same desire, with different degrees of force, and different modes of indulgence. Their characters are therefore different, and if so in reality, so also in imitation. Similarity of original structure does not constitute similarity or sameness of character, unless that similarity appear in the same circumstances, in the same manner, and with equal force. I still therefore adhere to my former opinion: and have not ventured, I hope, in vain to assert the merits of Shakespeare's females.

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
CHIEF OBJECTS OF CRITICISM
IN THE WORKS OF
SHAKESPEARE.

NO poetical writer among the moderns has afforded more employment to critics and commentators than Shakespeare. As he wrote while the manners, no less than the language, of his countrymen, were very different from what they are at present; and as he is reported to have been very careless about the fate of his performances after they were given to the public, he is become in many instances difficult, and almost unintelligible. Hence several learned and discerning

OBJECTS OF CRITICISM. 87

discerning editors have rendered essential service to the literature of their country, by explaining his obsolete phrases, by freeing his text from spurious passages, and by elucidating his frequent allusions to obscure or antiquated customs. Labours of this sort are so much the more valuable, as Shakespeare is justly accounted the great poet of human nature. Even to moralists and philosophers, his display and illustration of passions and manners, may afford not only amusement, but instruction.

“The operations of the mind,” as has been well observed by an anonymous writer, in his remarks on some of the preceding essays, “are more complex than those of the body: its motions are progressive: its transitions abrupt and instantaneous: its attitudes uncertain and momentary. The passions pursue their course with celerity; their direction may be changed, or their impetu-

88 OBJECTS OF CRITICISM

“osity modified by a number of causes
“which are far from being obvious, and
“which frequently escape our observa-
“tion. It would therefore be of great
“importance to philosophical scrutiny, if
“the position of the mind, in any given
“circumstances, could be fixed till it was
“deliberately surveyed; if the causes
“which alter its feelings and operations
“could be accurately shewn, and their
“effects ascertained with precision.” To
accomplish these ends, the dramatic writ-
ers, and particularly Shakespeare, may be
of the greatest use. An attempt has ac-
cordingly been made, in the preceding
discourses, to employ the light which he
affords us in illustrating some curious and
interesting views of human nature.

In Macbeth, misled by an overgrown
and gradually perverted passion, “we
“trace the progress of that corruption,
“by which the virtues of the mind are
“made to contribute to the completion

IN SHAKESPEARE. 89

“of its depravity.” In Hamlet we have a striking representation of the pain, of the dejection, and contention of spirit, produced in a person, not only of exquisite, but of moral and correct sensibility, by the conviction of extreme enormity of conduct in those whom he loves, or wishes to love and esteem. We observe in Jacques, how

“ Goodness wounds itself,

“ And sweet affection proves the spring of woe.”

We see in Imogen, that persons of real mildness and gentleness of disposition, fearing or suffering evil, by the ingratitude or inconstancy of those on whose affections they had reason to depend, are more solicitous than jealous; express regret rather than resentment; and are more apt to be overwhelmed with sorrow than inflamed with revenge. In contemplating the character of Richard the Third, we see, and are enabled to explain, the effect produced upon the mind by the display
of

90 OBJECTS OF CRITICISM

of great intellectual ability, employed for inhuman and perfidious purposes. We are led, on the other hand, by an obvious connection, to observe, in the character of Falstaff, the effect produced on the mind by the display of considerable ability, directed by sensual appetites and mean desires. King Lear illustrates, that mere sensibility, uninfluenced by a sense of propriety, leads men to an extravagant expression both of social and unsocial feelings; renders them capriciously inconstant in their affections; variable, and of course irresolute, in their conduct. In Timon of Athens, we have an excellent illustration of self-deceit, displayed in the consequences of that inconsiderate profusion which assumes the appearance of liberality, and is supposed, even by the inconsiderate person himself, to proceed from a generous principle; but which, in reality, has its chief origin in the love of distinction.

But

IN SHAKESPEARE. 91

But while Shakespeare furnishes excellent illustrations of many passions and affections, and of many singular combinations of passion, affection, and ability, in various characters, we perceive, in the justness of his imitation, the felicity of his invention. While he 'holds up a mirror,' in which we recognize the features and complexions of many powers and principles in the human mind, we must admire that fine polish by which they are received and reflected. He may be irregular in the structure of his fable, incorrect in his geographical or historical knowledge, and too close an imitator of nature in his mixture of serious and ludicrous incidents; for these are his principal errors: but in the faithful display of character, he has not hitherto been surpassed. Nor can the carelessness imputed to him in some other respects, be charged upon him, without injustice, in his portraits of human life.

The

92 OBJECTS OF CRITICISM

The true method of estimating his merit in this particular, is by such an examination as in the preceding discourses has been suggested, and in some measure attempted. General remarks are often vague; and, to persons of discernment, afford small satisfaction. But if we consider the sentiments and actions, attributed by the poet to his various characters, as so many facts; if we observe their agreement or disagreement, their aim, or their origin; and if we class them according to their common qualities, or connect them by their original principles, we shall ascertain, with some accuracy, the truth of the representation. For, without having our judgments founded in this manner, they are liable to change, error, and inconsistency. Thus the moralist becomes a critic: and the two sciences of ethics and criticism appear to be intimately and very naturally connected. In truth, no one who is unacquainted with

with the human mind, or entertains improper notions of human conduct, can discern excellence in the higher species of poetical composition.

It may be said however, in a superficial or careless manner, 'that in matters of this kind, laborious disquisition is unnecessary: and that we can perceive or feel at once, whether delineations of character be well or ill executed.'—Persons, indeed, of such catholic and intuitive taste, require no erudition. Conscious of their high illumination, they will scorn research, and reject enquiry. Yet many of those who find amusement in fine writing, cannot boast of such exquisite and peculiar endowments. As they need some instruction before they can determine concerning the merit of those delineations that imitate external objects; so they need no inconsiderable instruction before they will trust to their own impressions concerning the display of the human mind.

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mind. Now, if criticism be useful in forming, or in rectifying our taste for what is excellent in language, imagery, and arrangement of parts, it is surely no less useful in regulating our judgment concerning the imitation of human powers and propensities. Or is it an easier matter to determine whether an affection of the mind be called forth on a fit occasion, expressed with no unsuitable ardor, and combined with proper adjuncts; than to judge concerning the aptness of a comparison, or the symmetry of a sentence? Yet, in the present state of literary improvement, none, without being conscious of having cultivated their powers of taste, will decide with assurance concerning the beauties either of imagery or of language: and none, whose range of observation has been extensive, will pronounce the knowledge of human nature, of the passions and feelings of the heart, a matter of much easier attainment. If
the

IN SHAKESPEARE. 95

the display of character require the highest exertion of poetical talents, that species of criticism which leads us to judge concerning the poet's conduct in so arduous an enterprize, is not inferior, or unimportant.

Add to this, that the differences of opinion concerning some of Shakespeare's most distinguished characters, which the author of these imperfect essays has had occasion to remark, since they were first offered to an indulgent public, are sufficient to satisfy him, that such disquisitions may not only be amusing, but have a direct tendency to establish, on a solid foundation, the principles of sound criticism. Any thing further on this subject would be superfluous. Those who have a true relish for genuine and agreeable imitations of human nature, and whose judgments are not misled by prejudice, even though they should receive immediate enjoyment from the delineations

†

96 OBJECTS OF CRITICISM.

tions they contemplate, and be instantaneously inclined to pronounce them just; will receive additional satisfaction, if, by the dispassionate award of reason, their feelings are justified, and their prepossessions confirmed.

F I N I S .

